



September 30, 2020

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248 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harley Rouda
2300 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
2421 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Toomey and Manchin and Representatives Rouda and Mullin,

On behalf of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), a national medical specialty society representing more than 6,200 physicians and associated health professionals who specialize in the prevention and treatment of addiction, thank you for your introduction of the Improving Medicaid Programs' Response to Overdose Victims and Enhancing (IMPROVE) Addiction Care Act. This legislation would require state Medicaid programs to use their existing drug utilization review (DUR) programs to increase access to addiction treatment and boost safeguards for those on Medicaid who have experienced a non-fatal, opioid-related overdose.

While the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act helps ensure that prescribers are aware of their Medicare Part D patients' histories of nonfatal, opioid-related overdoses, no changes were made to help ensure that prescribers treating Medicaid beneficiaries are similarly informed. Medicaid beneficiaries have been found to be three times more likely to experience an opioid overdose when compared to privately insured individuals.ⁱ Furthermore, these patients often receive a legal opioid prescription even after a nonfatal opioid overdose.ⁱⁱ By connecting opioid overdose survivors to addiction treatment, alerting prescribers to their patient's previous nonfatal, opioid-related overdose or opioid use disorder diagnosis, and offering provider education regarding appropriate prescribing practices, the IMPROVE Addiction Care Act should help prevent opioid overdoses and deaths.

We are deeply appreciative of your leadership on this legislation, and stand ready to work with you to support its passage. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kelly Corredor, ASAM's Chief Advocacy Officer, at kcorredor@asam.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul H Earley M.D." in a cursive style.

Paul Earley, MD, DFASAM
President, American Society of Addiction Medicine

ⁱ Winfred Frazier, Gerald Cochran, Wei-Hsuan Lo-Ciganic, et al., "Medication-Assisted Treatment and Opioid Use Before and After Overdose in Pennsylvania Medicaid," JAMA, August 22, 2019, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2649173>

ⁱⁱ Marc Larochelle, Jane Liebschutz, Fang Zhang, Dennis Ross-Degnan, Frank Wharam, "Opioid Prescribing After Nonfatal Overdose and Association With Repeated Overdose," Annals of Internal Medicine, January 5, 2016, <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M15-0038>